

## The Murders of Crispus and Fausta 239

now nearly eighty years of age, but still vigorous and active enough in mind and body to undergo the fatigues of a journey to Jerusalem. Eusebius \* dwells upon the estimation in which Constantine held his mother, to whom full Imperial honours were paid. Golden coins were struck in her honour, bearing her effigy and the inscription, " Flavia Helena Augusta/" She amassed great riches, and although it is impossible directly to trace her influence upon State affairs, there is reason to believe that Helena, who owed her conversion, according to Eusebius, to the persuasion of her son, was a woman of pronounced and decided character and a great power at court.

There was also Constantine's half-sister, Constan-tia, the widow of Licinius, whose intercession with her brother had secured for her defeated husband an ill-kept promise of pardon and protection. Con-stantia was to exhibit even more striking proof of her influence a little later on by her skilful advocacy of the cause of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia, and her share in procuring the banishment of Athan-asius. These great ladies move in shadowy outline across the stage; we can scarcely distinguish their features or their form ; but we think we can see their handiwork most unmistakably in the appalling tragedies which we now have to narrate.

In 326 Constantine went to Rome to celebrate the completion of his twentieth year of reign. Diocletian had done the same—the only occasion upon which that great Emperor had ever set foot in the

\* *De Vita Const.*, iii., p. 47.